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A new commentary on the Constitution of the United States.—The last decade has witnessed the publication of an unparalleled number of books dealing with the social, economic, and political institutions of our own and other lands. Amid this flood of publications it is unusual to find one devoted entirely to the Constitution of the United States. It is this singularity which gives unwonted interest to the work under review,¹ for it limits itself wholly to an explanation and interpretation of the provisions of the fundamental law of the land.

Beginning with the analysis of the Preamble of the Constitution, the author takes up article by article and clause by clause the successive sententious provisions in this notable document. In many instances his expository comments include an account of the historical background or origin of the provision, an interpretation of its meaning, and numerous cases of its application during our national history. Examples are also given of the application of the principle involved or incorporated in the clause in question in the experience of other lands, especially in that of Great Britain. Thus, the comments on the clause which authorizes Congress "to declare war, grant letters of marque and reprisal, and make rules concerning captures on land and water" (pp. 70-73) include opinions expressed on the subject in the Constitutional Convention as well as illustrations from the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the Spanish-American War, and the world-war, the Austrian Declaration of War on Serbia and the American Declaration of War on Germany being quoted in full.

To the ordinary reader the most valuable feature of these expository comments will probably be the frequent references to the great cases which have come before the Supreme Court. In the discussion of almost every clause the author cites notable decisions in which the clause under examination was involved. In the case of the clause quoted, for example, attention is directed to the *Tampico* decision (1849) and to the *Insular Cases* (1901-5). Cross-references to related material add to the value of the volume.

The book is primarily for advanced students. The printing of the text of the Constitution and the Amendments in large heavy type and the explanations in smaller and lighter type will prove a helpful typographical device. The volume reveals evidences of painstaking and thorough work. A few errors, however, have been noted. Harvard College was established in 1636, not 1637 (p. xii); Charles II reigned from 1660 to 1685, not from 1630 to 1685 (p. 28). Serious students of government will question this statement: "To the extent that other countries have failed to follow the Constitution of the United States their governmental structures are weak" (p. ix). As a whole, the book is a creditable and worthy production. It will prove valuable to students of government as a reference work in which to find material not readily accessible elsewhere.

HOWARD C. HILL

¹ THOMAS JAMES NORTON, *The Constitution of the United States: Its Sources and Its Application*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1922. Pp. xx+298. \$2.00.